



# SENIORS

## SENIORS AND BRAIN INJURY

### PREVENTION

Many brain injuries are preventable, especially from falls. Here are some strategies for prevention:

- Encourage Exercise. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce older adults' chances of falling. Exercises that improve balance and coordination are especially important, but check with the older adult's doctor about which exercises are safest and best for them.
- Make the home or surroundings safer.
  - Remove things from stairs and floors that might cause tripping.
  - Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
  - Place items used often within easy reach, so that a step stool is not needed.
  - Install grab bars next to the toilet and in the tub or shower.
  - Place non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
  - Add brighter lighting and reduce glare by using lampshades and frosted bulbs.
  - Be sure there are handrails and lights on all staircases.
  - Be sure the older adult wears shoes that give good support and have thin, non-slip soles.
  - Remind loved ones to avoid wearing slippers and socks or going shoeless.



- Ask the healthcare provider to review all medicines. Ask the doctor or local pharmacist to look at all the prescription medicines the older adult takes as well as non-prescription drugs like cold medicines and various supplements. As people age, the way some medicines work in the body can change. This could cause a person to feel drowsy or lightheaded, which could lead to a fall.
- Take the person in your care for a vision check. Make sure an eye doctor checks to be sure eye glasses are correct and that there are no conditions that limit vision, like glaucoma or cataracts. Poor vision can increase the chance of falling.

## **AGING WITH A BRAIN INJURY**

For people with brain injury, aging can come with additional issues, including the following:

- Loss of skills gained in rehabilitation
- Increased risk for injuries from falls
- Increased risk for other injuries
- Increase in medical needs
- General decrease in endurance, strength, and range of motion
- Increased risk for social isolation
- Decrease in independent living skills